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Senators introduce legislation to stop sale of traffic signal controllers

Lansing – Sens. Tony Stamas (R-Midland) and Jud Gilbert (R-Algonac) introduced legislation today to outlaw the purchase, possession or use of traffic-signal controllers and provide penalties for offenders.

"This legislation will help protect residents and visitors traveling through our state," Stamas said. "These devices are dangerous and should only be in the hands of trained emergency personnel."

Known as Mobile Infrared Transmitters, the devices emit a beam to receivers installed at intersections and, when within a 1,500-foot range, change the light immediately from red to green. They are designed to allow emergency vehicles to clear intersections before approaching. They were never intended for use by the public.

Since the devices operate on infrared signals, they do not emit radio signals like radar jammers and certain laser detectors. Therefore, they do not violate Federal Communications Commission guidelines.

"People who abuse the transmitters create life-threatening situations at intersections and should be penalized," Gilbert said. "This legislation will punish offenders and deter others from buying and using the devices."

Stamas and Gilbert announced the introduction of Senate Bills 842 and 843 earlier today in a press conference attended by Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land, Attorney General Mike Cox, Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard and members of the law enforcement community.

Under this legislation penalties for offenders include:

- A misdemeanor charge with up to 90 days in jail and a fine of \$5,000 for the unlawful possession of a MIRT.
- A felony charge with up to two years in jail and a fine of \$10,000 for the unlawful sale or purchase of a MIRT.

- A felony charge with up to five years in jail and a fine of \$15,000 for individuals using a MIRT device resulting in a traffic accident.
- A felony charge with up to 15 years in jail and a fine of \$25,000 for the use of a MIRT resulting in death.

Senate Bills 842 and 843 have been referred to the Senate Committee on Transportation.

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Editor's note: Photos of Senators Stamas and Gilbert can be found on the Senate Majority Photowire at **www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/photowire**/.